Women's Panel

~~NOTES TAKEN AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BROOKLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT THE EDWARD DEVOTION HOUSE ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON~~, JANUARY 16, 1955.

Mrs. Lea Luquer gave a brief history of the ship "S.S. Brookline". 'In 1920, the time of the Liberty Loan drives, the Government gave to each city and town that made its quota and went over the top, the privilege of having a merchant marine vessel named for that particular city or town. Brookline went over the top.

'Mr. Ernest Dane was chairman of that drive. He was also the chairman of the Board of Selectmen, and the tradition was that the daughter of the mayor of the town, or whatever form of Government it was, would be the one asked to christen the boat. Mr. Dane had no daughters, and as my father, Judge Parker, and Mr. Dane were brought up together in Brookline, he asked me if I would christen the S.S.Brookline, a steel cargo carrier.

'I came down from college and Mr. Dane had a private car on the railroad which went up to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where the christening was to take place. It was a very exciting event, but one thing, unfortunately, happened. I smashed the boat with the bottle and the boat went out into Portsmouth Harbor, but it kept on going and got stuck in the mud on the other side. They always suspected it was sabotage!

'It was a terribly upsetting moment because there was to be a reception on the ship and nobody could get to it. So a very informal reception was held in the office of the building, and I presented to the officials a silver bowl with the date and name "S.S. Brookline" on it. In turn I was presented with what I have always called my "coffin", a perfectly beautiful hand-made, inlaid box with a plaque with the name of the boat and date, and inside a picture of

the ship in color, with the flags flying. That box was supposed to hold the red, white and blue rope with the rest of the glass from the broken bottle, which had to be sent to me later.

' I have some pictures here which I would like to present to the Historical Society to keep, because it seems to me that this is a little part of Brookline history. The "S.S.Brookline" went out to the West Coast and what her final resting place is or was, I do not know'.

MRS. BRIDGE. Thank you very much Mrs. Luquer. I think we all agree how ~~very~~ grateful we are to have these events recorded and in our own files while people can still tell us about them personally. It is discouraging to hear about something after the real on-the-spot history of it has been forgotten or lost.

As those of you who were here know, at our last annual meeting when the men of our Society talked over "old times", we all had a very pleasant afternoon. This year we thought it should be the ladies' turn. We haven't any prepared speeches, or special people "alerted" as we did last time, but are going to ask everyone to say something about things she remembers. I will now turn the meeting over to Mrs. C.Phillips Purdy.

MRS. PURDY: This time we are going to see what we can do! Forty-nine years ago in Brookline, we more or less lived in small communities. We went to school where we lived and played with the children we knew around us. My section was Fisher Hill on Buckminster Road and my mothers and father's house was the old Goddard Farm. Mr. Joseph Whity, I believe, bought most of the Goddard Farm, and the very nice old yellow house there was moved down to the corner of Sumner Road and Buckminster, and we lived in what was the orchard.

' I used to start up on the hill there and coast down. There was no Clinton Road and Clark Road was just put through a little bit, so we used to coast all the way down to the railroad track which

of course, now would be impossible to do. Near the railroad track was a very fascinating brook where we all played, and there was a little pond down there where father taught me to skate.

One thing I was never allowed to do, but which I would have liked to have done, was bob-sledding down the hill, starting up on Seaver Street or Holland Road. It was particularly exciting at night when it was icy and I could watch them tearing down towards Clark Road. Another thing I find my children know nothing about is punging. We used to start up on the hill and go right down Boylston Street and Hammond Street; you could usually get somebody to go with you. Mrs. Jeffery Richardson, will you tell us something you remember about your part of Brookline?

MRS. RICHARDSON: I lived on Monmouth Street, and for a few years I went to the Lawrence School. I don't know how many of you remember the old Lawrence School; It had two entrances; one entrance was for the 4th, 5th, and 9th grades; the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades went in the other entrance. In those days the Principal was a woman by the name of Miss Bean.

FROM THE FLOOR: I remember her.

MRS. RICHARDSON: Miss Bean used to have a bell which she would ring and the children would line up to go in. She had a ~~little~~ hard time managing some of the 9th grade boys. I remember that one day she leaned way out of a window, blowing her whistle violently, and her false hair fell off. John Branard picked it up with the tip of his fingers and you can imagine the snickers that went around. She was most embarrassed.

We all used to skate at Hall's Pond.

MRS. LUQUER: I was brought up in the Longwood section with Mrs. Richardson. The story goes, that in my childhood, one dark night, a man with his horse and buggy went down what he thought was Essex St.

straight down to Beacon Street and right down into Hall's Pond where there was quicksand and he was never seen again. I remember I often skated on the Pond and I always wondered whether I was over the horse and buggy.

We always used to pung in Longwood, and I don't know whether you'd be shocked, but I had a cousin, a granddaughter of the Rector of the Church of the Savior, and she and I used to pung untiredly. One day we came tearing from the Rectory down Carlton Street and hopped down behind a "pung". When we got to Beacon Street we discovered we were on the back of a hearse. I never told mother!

My mother told me another interesting thing about Hall's Pond. In the old days, on the corner of Essex Street and Commonwealth Avenue where the Cadillac place now is, there was a marsh and a brook off the Charles River. That brook went through to Hall's Pond. As you know thw Charles River was a tidal river, so the water in Hall's Pond was brackishly salt.

The first fire-house on Monmouth Street used to have horse-drawn engines and the horses used to be exercised down this street. The men were very nice and gave the children rides and we used to have a grand time riding on the horses.

I remember when we used to walk down to Coolidge Corner where my uncle had a place on Webster and Harvard Streets. During the war they planted big potato fields there and we children had to get up every Sunday and walk - children won't walk today but we had to walk every Sunday - to hoe the potatoes up there.

MRS. PURDY: It's certainly interesting to hear the different memories that we all have of Brookline. I have here a short paper of some of Mrs. Francis Denny's remarks that I should like to read.

(Copy Mrs. Denny's remarks as read.) ?

MRS. PURDY: Is there someone here who could tell us more about the that Shakespeare Club?

FROM THE FLOOR: Yes, I remember about the Shakespeare Club. There were only about two women in certain plays Shakespeare and you got a very, very small part. I remember this one girl who had a very short part in between two long speeches and she was supposed to say,"Who comes here?" She waited tensly for her moment but the other person read right over it and she never had the chance to say it at all! She later resigned on the ground that Shakespeare made her legs ache.

MRS. PURDY: Is Miss Emily Furness here?

MISS FURNESS: I didn't know I had to say anything, but I can remember Miss Mary Foster's School in the Crocker House on the corner of Cypress and Boylston Streets. We used to go there and sit around the dining-room table. I was about 9 years old and I always wondered how Miss Foster ever taught us anything. School started at 9 and went to 12, with a half-hour recess and also a mid-morning break when we always went into the Music Room and were allowed to sing for half an hour around the piano. We also stretched out in the sun on the floor and did exercises. All I remember learning is just poetry and seeing how many birds we made acquaintances with. Marion - Ruth Pond and I lived tog.

FROM THE FLOOR: The next school was Miss Pierce's School.

MRS.PURDY: I went there. It was on Walnut Street and has now become the Park School. I wonder how many of you later went in town on the school car down Boylston Street, when the cars ran to Chestnut Hill? It was just an extra car put on, I suppose, because there were so many of us going back and forth. Father and Mr. Galen Stone and some other men got the officials to put on the school car. I think it went a few minutes ahead of the regular car. It simply had a large sign "School". Anybody could ride on that car, but I don't think anyone did more than once! It was just put on to accomodate us.

MRS LUQUER: I used to walk in town every morning with my father and Mr. Henry Ware, both of whom were 6 feet 3 to 4; we used to walk

to the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Marlboro Street, where they would take the subway and I'd walk the remaining two blocks to school. I walked with them for 9 years, two miles each morning.

MISS JOSEPHINE WILDER: When I started school I went to the little school on the corner right across from where S.S.Pierce's is now, the Harvard School.

FROM THE FLOOR: Right in the middle of Beacon Street, that's where we started our education! I always remember mother's telling me the first day she took me out, she let go of my hand for a minute while she said to the teacher,"I have a new pupil for you". Then she looked around and there wasn't any pupil there. I ran as fast as I could. Of course, lots of you remember Mr. Cole, the music teacher?

FROM THE FLOOR: Oh,yes. I wouldn't sit down with the other children at school, I remember, and I don't know why because I hav e always liked people, but I wouldn't, and the teacher made me sit on the platform with her. One day she said, "You cannot sit here any longer because MR. Cole's coming and that's his seat." So I had to go down amongst the other children and there I stayed.

FROM THE FLOOR: I used to go to dancing school at the corner of Davis Avenue and Cypress Street.

MRS PURDY: I learned to dance at Miss Hills'. My husband and I both went, in the old Beaconsfield Casino. I don't know what happened to the Beaconsfield Casino class, it was given up, but then we went to the Talbot's house on Buchminster Road and Miss Hill taught us in the ball-room at the top of the house.

MRS.KENNETH BOND: Mrs. Bridge and I went to Miss Hill's dancing class, there with Robert Talbot and Robert Stone and Bartlett Bacon. On stormy days we used to drive ~~up there~~ in a closed carriage from Mr. Hill's (no relation) Livery Stables, with Mr. Hill driving ~~(himself.)~~ in person May I add that Miss Hill was very pretty, and she always wore high-button bronze slippers.

MRS.PURDY: All Saints Church also started at the Beaconsfield Casino. I think Miss Julia Addison should tell us about that because her father was the first minister there.

MISS ADDISON: All Saints has just had its 60th anniversary and Beaconsfield Casino was the original place of worship. Then a wooden church was built which began the Sunday School. It became the large, beautiful church which is there now. The small wooden one was carted away and became a theatre I think. Later a Parish House and Rectory were built.

In my mother's memoirs you will find mention of the little grey house on Walnut Street,(across from where Bishop Stokes and his family now live), where she and my Grandmother Gibbs lived after they had boarded with Miss Rosa Young. The little house was where she and my father went by carriage to have their wedding reception, following the ceremony at ST.Paul's Church. (The house has since become a peroxide blonde!)

In earlier telephonic days, our Rectory was often taken for Thomas' Fish Market or the Animal Hospital. One day a man phoned and asked for the doctor. My father answered. The voice said,"Dorothy is not well'. "Shall I come over?' said my father. 'She hasn't been well for a long time', replied the voice. Papa said, 'I'd better come over'. Then the voice said,'I think she's going to have kittens.' 'Oh', laughed Papa, 'You've got the wrong number'. Another man phoned and said in blatant accents, 'Something's the matter with my bull dog. Will you call for him or shall I bring him over?' 'I don't think either will happen', replied my father, 'for this is not the Animal Hospital.'

FROM THE FLOOR: Dr. Silas Houghton was our family doctor when I was a small child, and his telephone number was very similar to Young & Brown's, the druggist. I always remember the story he told

me. He wanted to make me laugh and cheer me up. He said that one night at two o'clock in the morning the telephone rang and the voice said,'Are you Young and Brown?' And he said, 'No, I'm old and grey', and he hung up the telephone.

FROM THE FLOOR: I remember before anybody had telephones, and the first time I ever spoke on one was when we all went down to the corner of Cypress Street to Butler's Drug Store. My brother was working in the telephone company in Burlington, and that was the nearest way he could reach us. He would telephone to Butler's and they sent up one of the boys to tell us.

FROM THE FLOOR: Where was Butler's?

FROM THE FLOOR: Just at the foot of Davis Avenue. I think a harberdashery store is there now. About ten of us used to go down to the store when there was a telephone call.

FROM THE FLOOR: And then there was that wonderful old blacksmith's shop on Cypress Street with that wonderful horse-shoeing smell! We used to love to hang around that door. There used to be a grocery store, Bentley's, on the corner of Cypress and Boylston Streets, where you went up two or three steps to go in.

FROM THE FLOOR: I used to buy things there because they surely would not cheat me.

MRS. KENNETH BOND: My family lived in Boston at 92 Marlboro Street,corner of Clarendon, and when it was getting citified they decided to look around in the suburbs. They had a horse and buggy and they would go in that, hunting a spot, or they would take the streetcar which went as far as Cypres Street and then they would walk up the hill. They found a place which they thought would be ideal, away from the street cars and yet near enough to transportation. My sister and I were born in the house they built there, and it <u>was</u> ideal in those days. We walked to the Runkle School, before we went to Miss Haskell's and Miss Dean's in town, and to Sunday

School at the First Parish. Now the house is on the Worcester Turnpike!

FROM THE FLOOR: Is there anyone who remembers the horse cars on Longwood Avenue? I was born on Longwood Avenue, at the corner of St.Paul Street about 100 years ago or so! The horse cars started at the head of Longwood Avenue and went down to Huntington Avenue. When we children went to school the conductors and drivers were very nice. One was Ralph and one was Charlie and as they came along they'd stop the car and pull us on and not charge us any fare. Then we'd ride down as far as --- well, the Lawrence School is on Francis Street, and we'd have to cross the dump to go over to the school.

My father built his house when there were only three other houses on the street, and we used to coast down what we called Dane's Hill,which is now Kent Street, onto Beacon Street before Beacon Street was wide. And speaking of a blachsmith's shop, we used to go over to the blacksmith's shop to get warm. It seems impossible; I can remember these things so clearly.

FROM THE FLOOR: Wasn't there a toboggan slide on Gorey Hill?

FROM THE FLOOR: One on Wright's too.

FROM THE FLOOR: I coasted down Corey Hill lots of times, right down Beacon. Someone would stand at the bottom of the hill and watch out for us.

MRS. PURDY: Mrs. Luquer has just handed me a picture which I will Show you which makes me think of the sleighing on Beacon Street. One of the great delights of my childhood was to be allowed to go sleighing with my grandfather. He would start at Kenmore Square and go up to Coolidge Corner, and if he'd meet a friend who was also driving, they'd say 'Let's have a little race',and away we'd go.

Miss Josephine Wilder: I remember -- I shouldn't remember, I don't remember any of the refined things -- but right across from

the church was where Mrs. Conant lived. The barn is still there, a brick barn, and if I remember correctly, during the week, Tuesday or Friday, her man always went down to Brighton to bring the cows back. When he was in Brighton he always celebrated, and as children we adored hanging on the fence and seeing Pat coming down the street, driving the cows, and weaving from side to side.

In the top of that barn they had a ring where they used to have cockfights. Of course that was against the law, but they would have them. Very stylish men would come out from Boston, - they were always goodlooking, with dog carts, - and they'd have bundles under their arms. We'd know when they'd go into the barn and upstairs, there was always going to be a cockfight.

I never saw the cockfight, but I have seen the ring hundreds of times. It may be there now; there may still be the cockfights for all I know, but I can only tell about the cockfights years ago.

FROM THE FLOOR: I think I must be older than anyone else here. Nobody has spoken of the man with the dancing bears. We lived on Cottage Street and I can remember perfectly his coming periodically and making the bears dance and climb up our pine tree.

FROM THE FLOOR: Oh, I remember that. Does anyone remember the torchlight parades? That was when our citizens were running for congress or selectman. My father was a selectman in 1895. They had wonderful torchlight parades. You don't need them today, there are so many lights on the streets.

MRS. LUQUER: Mrs. Bridge asked me if I would speak of the circus trains. Early on a Sunday in June the circus would come to town and there were usually five circus trains. My brother and I were up at six o'clock in the morning, the first ones on top of the fence, to see them pull in. If the fifth one hadn't come before we went to church, we were disappointed. Sunday afternoon father used to take us to Huntington Avenue to see them put up the tents - on the vacant lot

next to the New England Conservatory.

Then Monday morning we'd get "dispensation" and were taken out of school and into the Conservatory. My grandfather was on the teaching staff there and his office was in the front of the building. There we were set up in chairs in front of the window and we watched the circus parade start its tour down into Boston.

I have a picture here taken in 1892 on the corner of Hawes and Beacon Streets. On Sunday afternoon one of the sports was to go bicycle riding. The size of the bicycles and the costumes are rather attractive. At the time of this picture, Carlton Street only came up to Ivy Street and then was known as the Lawrence Grove. Here's a picture of the house which later became the Cunningham House, and the picture looking down from that house on Ivy Street shows there were then no other houses between that house and St. Mary's Street, all the way down Ivy Street. It was all open groves; a rather lovely winter picture.

MRS. PURDY: Is there anything else anyone would like to tell us?

FROM THE FLOOR: I'd like to ask a question. Did the letter boxes ever used to be painted red? I sort of have that in mind.

FROM THE FLOOR: They were always too high, that' all I can remember.

MRS. PURDY: The fire boxes were always red. I don't remember about the letter boxes, but they may have been.

FROM THE FLOOF: Did they have two horses or one on th water carts? That's another thing that bothers me.

MRS. PURDY: Two, I think.

FROM THE FLOOR: Does anyone remember anything about the horse parades?

FROM THE FLOOR: Oh, yes. They came around the 19th of April,

FROM THE FLOOR: How about entertainment? Was there anything?

FROM THE FLOOR: They used to have coffee parties in the Brookline Assembly in the Town Hall. The men would hire a horsecar, but the women had to have chaperones. Mother told me about that.

FROM THE FLOOR: May I say a word about the old Fourth of July's? It seems to me they have changed more than anything else. We had parades and of course the fireworks on the playground.

FROM THE FLOOR: One more thing that was wonderful was the day of the Country Club races. You could sit on your piazza and see all these wonderful races as they roundedup Walnut Street. Eastern Horse was the name. They had them in 1928 and 1929, but after the depression came they stopped. Horse Race Association and Eastern Horse joined for two or three years.

FROM THE FLOOR: Speaking of seeing things, from my room at home I used to be able to look out from my bed and see the lighthouse. Of course you can't now because of all the tall buildings.

FROM THE FLOOR: My Sunday school teacher, a Mrs. Wentworth of the Church of oOur Savior, said when she was on Carlton Street, right opposite the Church, she used to look out of her window, and she could look right in town and see her husband when he left the office.

FROM THE FLOOR: Mrs. Bridge, as an outsider, I'd like to know whether anyone went to the theatres a long time ago.

FROM THE FLOOR: Ch,yes. We went to Boston to the Castle Square Theatre and saw Mary Young and John Craig and Donald Meek, and then E.E.Clive at the Copley Theatre. And B.F.Keith's had wonderful vaudeville. But there was no theatre in Brookline. I think the first moving picture theatre they had here was on the corner of High Street and Walnut. They had ~~the/on~~ pictures once a week, but it didn't last very long.

MRS. BRIDGE: Much as I regret stopping these reminiscences, I think we must adjourne now and go have some refreshments. If you do

remember anything else just jot it down and send it in so we can add it as a postscript to this, and thank you all very much.

(Applause; meeting adjourned 4.30 o'clock)

N.B. Miss Julia Addison sent us the following remarks for our records.)